

A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR STUDENT HEALTH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

NASPA Annual Conference

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Presenters

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Session Objectives

- Define the mission and purpose of health in higher education.
- Discuss major challenges facing the profession in the next 5-10 years.
- Describe a proposed national agenda for health in higher education.

Why Create a National Agenda?

- Higher education is in transition
- Clarify the role of health in higher education
- Create a common language and purpose for the work of health in higher education
- To do this, we must first:
 - ▣ Define the purpose of higher education – What is a “successful” student?
 - ▣ Define health – What is a “healthy” student community?
 - ▣ Prioritize deployment of our finite resources given our current systems and students’ needs

Higher Education

What is the purpose of higher education?

Purposes of Higher Education

- Retain and graduate students
- Develop students who:
 - ▣ Become productive citizens of their community, city, state and country
 - ▣ Attain gainful employment
 - ▣ Can think analytically
 - ▣ Communicate skillfully
 - ▣ Have the capacity for lifelong learning
 - ▣ Discern and appreciate diversity among people and ideas
 - ▣ Others...?

Purposes of Higher Education

- The most important educational goal confronting higher education in the 21st century is to optimize learning by students and by society in general: to educate a growing, increasingly diverse set of learners to be effective and fulfilled as workers and citizens, capable of meeting new challenges they will encounter throughout their lives. To optimize learning means setting forward-looking expectations for universities and colleges, conveying the need to educate graduates for living effectively in a complex world, in terms of personal health as well as financial and social well-being. Optimized learning is that which helps strengthen democratic and civic institutions in the nation. (*Engaging Higher Education in Societal Challenges of the 21st Century*, National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008)

Purpose of Higher Education

- Students should become empowered through the development of many intellectual and practical skills; students must take responsibility for their own learning and their participation in the civic processes of our democracy; and students must become informed about conditions that affect their lives in the US and as citizens of many wider communities. (*Greater Expectations*, AAC&U, 2002)
- Cognitive competence, intrapersonal competence, interpersonal competence, and practical competence. (Magolda, 1999)
- *Learning Reconsidered: A campus-wide focus on the student experience* (The National Association Of Student Personnel Administrators & The American College Personnel Association, 2004)

How do we measure “success”?

- What can we measure? (variables)
 - Learning? (when, where, and what does that mean?)
 - Employment after graduation?
 - Grad/Professional school admission/attendance?
 - Post-graduation socio-economic status?
 - Social capital?
 - GPA?
 - IQ?
 - Cognition?
 - Reasoning?
 - Problem solving?
 - Memory?
 - Attention?
 - Critical thinking?
 - Concentration?
 - Social skills?
 - Language?
 - Math?
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Health

What is health?

Definitions of Health

□ **Medical Model:**

The absence of disease and the presence of high levels of function. "A state characterized by anatomic, physiologic and psychologic integrity; ability to perform personally valued family, work and community roles; ability to deal with physical, biologic, psychologic and social stress..." (Stokes J. J Community Health 1982;8:33-41)

□ **Holistic model**

"A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (WHO, 1947)

Definitions of Health

□ **Wellness Model:**

"The extent to which an individual or group is able to realize aspirations and satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is a positive concept, emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities." (*Health promotion: a discussion document*. Copenhagen, WHO, 1984; amplified in the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, 1986)

□ **Resiliency:**

"The capability of individuals, families, groups and communities to cope successfully in the face of significant adversity or risk." (Vingilis & Sarkella, *Social Indicators Research* 1997;40:159)

How do we measure “health”?

- Medical
- Holistic
- Wellness
- Resiliency
- What can we measure? (variables)
 - ▣ Health status? (symptoms and illnesses)
 - ▣ Health behaviors? (i.e. smoking, diet/exercise, sexual behaviors)
 - ▣ Health beliefs/values/attitudes/knowledge/skills?
 - ▣ Social networks/support?
 - ▣ Environmental influences (i.e. built environments, policies)?

Health + Higher Education

What is the mission and purpose of health in higher education?

Health and success?

Current and future?

Guidelines for a College Health Program, ACHA, 1999

- (C)ollege health professionals attempt to focus on what students are doing “right” and what measures can enhance capacity, and not solely on problems or illnesses.
- College health programs have flourished in the past century, primarily due to a simple and clear mission: “to advance the health of students.”
- A college health program should provide a wide spectrum of services, which will support the “health” of the campus community in its broadest sense.

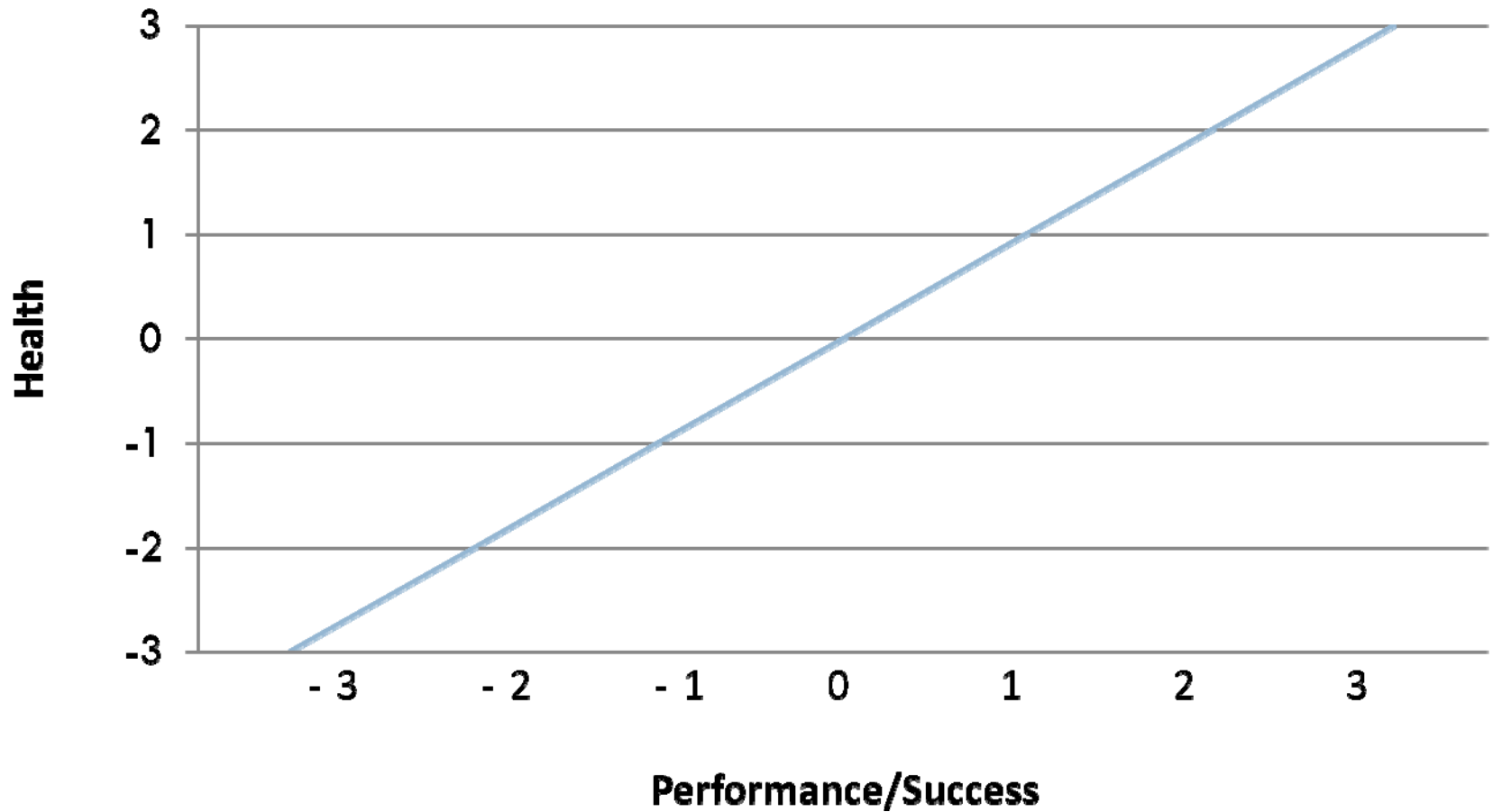
Standards of Practice for Health Promotion in Higher Education, 2005

- Student learning is at the core of the higher education academic mission. Health promotion serves this mission by supporting students and creating healthy learning environments. A wide range of professionals work to enhance health, both on the campus and individual level. It is common to find health educators, nurses, physicians, counselors, faculty, and staff from residence life, student activities, campus recreation and other student affairs departments leading or collaborating on health promotion initiatives that advance student learning and the mission of higher education. Programs and policies surrounding issues such as alcohol and other drug use, sexual misconduct, and mental health are increasingly viewed as campus wide concerns that affect student health and academic progress.

Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2006

- (F)oster wellness focused campus communities by empowering individuals to reach their full potential and taking responsibility for themselves and others, (and) also to contribute to the creation of healthy and socially just learning environment.
- (A)ssisting students in leading healthier lives, and engage individuals who will become political, social, and economic decision makers, thereby advancing the collective health of the community.
- Clinical health services must make it a priority to first address health risks and problems prevalent in the population to impede academic success and a student's capacity to learn.

Health & Success – A Theory



Purposes of Health in Higher Education

Place in time:

Future

Current

For the sake of:
Health
Success

Cardiovascular disease Obesity Breast/ testicular exam	Asthma Sexual health Allergies
Health insurance Health consumerism	Mental health, URI, sleep, alcohol, physical activity, nutrition, relationships



Looking Toward the Future

Challenges

A Proposed National Agenda for Health in
Higher Education

Major Challenges Facing Health in Higher Education in Coming Years

- Lack of shared definition of success—for both student health and higher education
- Lack of shared articulation of health outcomes relevant to student success
- Lack of peer-reviewed, published, replicated, research/studies related to effective interventions with students on relevant concerns/variables
- Lack of utilization of multiple, “better” strategies that will achieve relevant health outcomes for student success
- Unknown return on investment

Major Challenges Facing Health in Higher Education in Coming Years

- Lack of a national data set and often insufficient institutional data, specifically related to relevant concerns/variables
- Inability to describe academic-related health disparities based on student demographics, and targeted interventions with specific populations
- Need for all students to have adequate, usable student health insurance coverage while they are in college
- Lack of resources
 - Staffing, training, budget
 - Unfunded mandates (federal, institutional)

A National Agenda for Health in Higher Education

- The primary purpose of health in higher ed is to improve health outcomes of students that are related to their success in the current system
- Collect and share data regarding both student health and success
 - ▣ Representative national data set
 - ▣ Regional, state, county, local and institutional data
 - ▣ Demographic characteristics of students
- Cultural competence/inclusion
 - ▣ Reduce health disparities that impact student success
 - ▣ Increase competence of professional staff and student staff/volunteers

A National Agenda for Health in Higher Education

- Use evidence/theory-based practice
 - ▣ Three questions (MK)
 - ▣ Five questions (SM)
- Identify and use the best strategy/methods to communicate with, educate, influence, and support students in attaining health and academic success for the specific population
 - ▣ Return on investment
 - ▣ Technology
- Conduct cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses
 - ▣ Prevention costs less than treatment, but it not free.
 - ▣ How much funding per student to achieve each outcome?

A National Agenda for Health in Higher Education

- Develop students' capacities to manage their own health needs now and in the future
 - ▣ Require/offer insurance coverage
 - ▣ Clinical care for current health concerns
 - ▣ Port of entry to mental health support systems
- Emergency preparedness/crisis management
 - ▣ Planning
 - ▣ Immediate mental health response



Now

What?

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